

Report prepared on the 40th anniversary of the partnership between the states of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) and Maryland (USA) under Partners of the Américas.

In mid 1964, Governor J. Millard Tawes of Maryland was called by the State Department on whether he would be interested in joining a “people to people” type program under the Inter-American Cooperation Program called Alliance for Progress. The State of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil had been identified as a suitable partner for Maryland. Both States had similar features: Chesapeake Bay and Guanabara Bay, Atlantic Ocean coast and significant fishing activity, a similar balance between urban and rural populations, a geographical coincidence in that Maryland wraps half of the Nation’s capital in the same way that the “old” State of Rio surrounded the City of Rio de Janeiro, at that time the Federal Capital of Brazil.

As this was to be a community driven program, Governor Tawes called on two leading citizen in Baltimore, namely Mr. Julian Stein a Maryland public relations consultant and Mr. Albert Berney, president of the large Department Store – Hamburgers in downtown Baltimore, and asked them to form a committee, travel to Brazil and take a look at this State of Rio de Janeiro. They in turn invited a key person to join them, namely Dr. Vernon S. Vavrina, Deputy Superintendent of Baltimore Public Schools. Meanwhile, in Niteroi, than the capital of the “old” State of Rio de Janeiro, Governor Paulo Torres proceeded in the same way to form a local citizen committee which included a lady leader in social affairs, a State Legislature Delegate who was also a leader in agriculture and had established the State Extension Service, a leading journalist, and a young student leader who was active in social work in slum areas. The Maryland group came for a first visit in November 1964 and immediately stroke a positive note of understanding and rapport. Soon after, the first “fluminenses”, name for the people from State of Rio (latin for “those who live by the river”) went to Maryland to get the initial exchanges going. The first 15 years of the exchange reflect several success stories:

Maryland/Rio, as pioneers, put in place a high-school student exchange which over a span of 10 years involved 450 kids, 300 going north and 150 going south. Students went for seven weeks, had to stay with a family and attend school with their host “brother or sister”. Students had to pay their international travel. This was a great success and brought great visibility to the Partners. Student exchanges involve the schools, the parents, the teachers, and the press. Although this exchange was stopped in 1975, almost 27 years ago, people still ask about it and former participants want to send their children or their grandchildren to Maryland. Some of the former participants reached important public life positions, such as, for example, the former Mayor of the City of Niteroi, the former Chief of Education for Niteroi, the State Secretary for Health, and the State Under-Secretary for the Environment. They all obviously kept a softspot for Maryland in their hearts.

In those same initial 15 years, the Rio/Maryland partnership entertained a large number of "small projects" which ranged from assistance to building two classroom schools in needy areas, to providing tools and equipment to workers training organizations, and the provision of books which we obtained at USIS/Rio to a large number of small libraries throughout the interior. During this period, Maryland students of several different high-schools contributed seed money which kicked off construction of much needed classrooms in poor areas with matching funds from local school authorities, Service Clubs, and the local communities. A key example is "Escola Companheiros de Maryland" in the district of Chatuba in Nilopolis where small contributions from Glen Burnie Sr.High, Edmonson Sr.High and Canton High originated a 9 classroom school with 1100 students in 3 shifts.

In 1966, the Maryland Partners Group talked Governor J.Millard Tawes into joining them on a renewed visit to Rio. A memorable visit which took Governor Tawes to visit many places in the State of Rio and to address the State Legislature. His visit built considerable public awareness for the existing Partners relationship.

By 1975 the old State of Rio and the City of Rio de Janeiro (formerly the State of Guanabara) merged to become a single State and the City of Rio became the State capital. This also started a new phase for the Partners. The City of Rio brought all of its potential in culture and academia to the Program. The first cultural exhibits took place. Rio artists showed their work in Baltimore. With the support of USIA a new University Linkages program brought University of Maryland into signing agreements with the major Universities in Rio. More travel funds were available in those days and a large number of professionals moved back and forth between the two States.

By 1985, IBM/Brasil funded a major program in the area of persons with disabilities. This was for all partnerships in Brazil. The program consisted of taking brazilian experts in this area to their "partner" state in the US to visit institutions and organizations involved with the handicapped. At the same time expert from the US, in our case from Maryland, came to Rio to deliver lectures and workshops on the subject. Rio took considerable advantage of this three year program. As the result of the Brazilians visiting Maryland, several new organizations were established in Rio including Center for Independent Living (CVI -- Centro de Vida Independente), Very Special Arts, CISAT (vocational training for needy children) and others. All of these projects took advantage of the training opportunities offered by Melwood Training Center in Upper Marlboro, Md.

In recent years, the Rio/Maryland partnership has supported the efforts of ABRAPIA, one of Brazil's largest organizations in the area of preventing child abuse, family violence, sexual abuse and the like, mostly in lower income areas. ABRAPIA leaders and technical people have visited several Maryland institutions (House of Ruth, for example). The latest Partners project with ABRAPIA, with funding from the Small Grants Fund of Partners of the Americas Inc. was to assist in the training, early in 1999, of about 70 field workers and volunteers of ABRAPIA in the area of conflict resolution.

Since 1990 the partnership gave increasing support to environmental projects. Environment became a universal priority and the University of Maryland, through the College of Life Sciences and the College of Agriculture gave support to several projects at Rio Universities involved with the "Save the Bay" type projects and biology conservation programs. As a result, Rio and Maryland established a unique Student Exchange project called "Ecosystem Study Project" and which in alternate years takes a group of usually 10 graduate and undergraduate students, escorted by one or two teachers, on a two, three or four weeks visit to the "partner" state. The visit and support is organized by the local universities and funding is partially provided by Partners, by the Office of Public Affairs of the State Dept. and by leading environmental NGOs such as The Humane Society of the U.S. and EARTHVOICE. Students still pay their own way. The project is going into its 13th year and continues as a great success.

In Dec/96 a cooperative Agreement was signed between the ZOOs of Rio de Janeiro and Baltimore. The objective is to trade technical information on Zoo administration and preservation of animal life.

Environmental activities also led to creation of new organizations in Rio. Instituto Baia de Guanabara – IBG was established based on the model of Chesapeake Bay Foundation – CBF, to monitor progress of the clean-up of Guanabara Bay. IBG and FIRJAN (the Federation of Industries of Rio de Janeiro) have jointly organized, in march/2000, a workshop to bring the business community into the "save the bay" discussions.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) has been to the State of Rio twice represented by their former Director, Mr. Richard Dolesh (now with NRPA) who was responsible for promoting the idea of an exchange in the area of Cultural and Heritage Tourism involving the community of North Brentwood. A delegation from N.Brentwood led by Mayor Lillian K.Beverly visited Rio in nov/99 to initiate such exchanges.

As a result of all these contacts, Partners at both ends have identified the opportunity to establish an "Agreement for Environmental Cooperation" under which institutions in Rio and Maryland would take mutual advantage of their experiences and develop a multi year exchange and training program. Each interested organization will contribute to the effort with funds or in kind, and create a channel for the transfer of know-how involved in all the environmental projects underway in Rio and Maryland. The proposed Agreement is currently under discussion with the environmental community of both states.

The Schools of Nursing of the Federal University of Rio (Escola de Enfermagem Ana Nery – the oldest in Brazil) and the School of Nursing of the Univ. of Maryland in Baltimore (one of the oldest in the USA) have initiated an exchange to promote reciprocal technical visits.

Rio's largest Ballet Dance School "Maria Olenewa" received a leading dancer from the Washington Ballet, Ms. Lorraine Spiegler. Ms. Spiegler spent two weeks in Rio teaching classes in Modern Dance the result of which were incorporated in their end of year concert. Currently, Ms. Spiegler is developing a project which will bring Goucher College (Baltimore, Md.) dance students to Rio. Part of the exchange will take place at the famous Mangueira Samba School of Rio

- **Character Education.** A major goal started in the year 2000 was the introduction of an ethics in education program known in the US as "Character Counts". The program has been adopted in several Maryland Counties, particularly in Gaithersburg where several visitors from Rio saw it in action and learned about the effect it had on the entire school and on the relations between all the players in the school. Local education officials in Rio have expressed interest and plans are for a growing involvement of Rio Schools and education officials of both states in this program.

Business Community. Rio/Maryland Partners, as a result of the productive relations established with the Office of International Trade (OIT) of the Dept. of Economic Development in Baltimore, are engaged in increasing the participation of the business community in our partnership. Particularly the small and medium business man. We have increasingly been working with SEBRAE, the Brazilian S&M business support organization to identify ways and means for joint efforts. As part of this effort we have started a project to link the Chambers of Commerce of smaller cities in the interior and let them develop their own exchanges. Something that could snowball. Our first attempt is between Hagerstown, Md. and Resende, RJ.

- **Trade Missions.** In November 1999, a trade mission from Maryland, led by Governor Parris N. Glendening, spent four days in Rio de Janeiro. Rio Partners organized significant events of this visit such as a breakfast meeting attended by 40 local environmentalists, NGO leaders, public and private environmental agencies, and academia. Visitors and hosts compared experiences related to the clean-up of Guanabara Bay and Chesapeake Bay. The visiting party had a lunch meeting with Rio academic representatives to discuss the topic of "Federalism, The U.S. Experience". Finally, the Governor of Maryland and Governor Anthony Garotinho of the State of Rio signed a Memorandum of Understanding reaffirming the desire of both states for strengthening the existing bonds, to continue support of educational and cultural exchanges and, to support international trade.

Rio/Maryland Partners have initiated an exchange of librarians and library science. The effort is being led by Heleni Pedersoli of McKeldin Library of the University of Maryland (UMCP) and Elda Mulholland, formerly Director of Rio's Catholic University (PUC/Rio) Central Library and now with the US Library of Congress' Office in Rio. Leila Cristina R. Andrade, Sr. Librarian at UERJ/Rio was the first Librarian to visit Maryland under this new Program.

In 2002 and 2003 several volunteers traveled to Rio or to Maryland to foster Partners projects. Among them:

Dr. Bettye Walters – Director, Center for Government and Corporate Veterinary Medicine, Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine. To attend a Partners Leaders training meeting in Belo Horizonte, MG and subsequently in Rio to advance the Rio – Baltimore Zoos Agreement;

Prof. Elda Mulholland visited Maryland to initiate coordination of the Librarian Exchange.

- Fabiano Godoy, associated with the Golden Lion Tamarin preservation project in Rio, visited Maryland to learn techniques associated with forest management and the creation of ecological corridors;

Prof. Silvana Leone – visited Maryland Schools under a proposed School to School linkage project under which schools in Rio will exchange directly with schools in Maryland;

Axel Graef – Under-Secretary for the Environment in the State of Rio de Janeiro and a founding member of Instituto Baía de Guanabara (modeled after the Chesapeake Bay Foundation) attended a Partners Leaders training meeting in Kansas City and proceeded to visits with environmental agencies in Maryland.

In December 2003, following a recommendation of Lorraine Spiegler, a member of the Washington Ballett and an active member of the Rio Partners, the ballet company called Ballet Jovem of Rio de Janeiro, was accepted and performed in Music that Moves with the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center. A large fundraising effort was behind taking the 12 young dancers and their leaders to the US. The performance at the Kennedy Center was reported as marvelous.

2004 started out with a successful exchange in the Dance field. 20 students and 2 teachers from Goucher College of Baltimore, Md. spent three weeks of May/June attending an intensive cultural program which included visits and lectures at several Rio Dance schools, workshops and dance performances. Several days were spent at the famous Mangueira Samba School under the theme: “What is the process of Carnival and How does it all come together”.

Early 2005, Prof. Edward Kaufman of the Center of International Development and Conflict Management of the Univ. of Maryland came to Rio to attend a Seminar on “Citizen’s Diplomacy” and to establish an exchange program with the Group of Analysis on International Conflict Prevention of Universidade Candido Mendes (UCAM) in Rio. As a result of this exchange the UCAM group in Rio under the leadership of Prof. Clovis Brigagão, is becoming a reference center in Brazil on Conflict Resolution issues. The new exchange also resulted in the attendance of two young representatives of the UCAM group in a Summer Training Course on Multi-Track Diplomacy at Univ. of Maryland during the current months of June and July.

In March 2005 a delegation from the Greater Crofton Rotary Club (close to Annapolis, Md) came to Rio to establish a joint effort with the Rio/Maryland Partners of the Americas in support of two schools. One in the county of Nilópolis, neighbouring the City of Rio, and where some 35 years ago, Partners, through the cash contributions from several public schools in the Greater Baltimore area, motivated the local School Board to triple these donations and ultimately, over the years, built a nine classrooms School which was named “Escola Companheiros de Maryland” and accommodates a student population of 1,100 in three shifts. The Greater Crofton Rotary Club, working closely with the local Rotary Clubs

grant has now gone through the channels of Rotary International and the computers shall be delivered in October 2005.

The same grant of 10 computers was committed to the State of Rio High School "Leopoldo Oscar Stutz" in the community of Barra Alegre, County of Bom Jardim, some 160 Km from Rio de Janeiro. At both Schools, the Rotary delegation was met with a great party based on the continuous ties between the two Sister States, Maryland and Rio de Janeiro.

In March and April, Jorge Punaro Gomes, a marine biologist with the Municipal Dept. of the Environment, of Niteroi, RJ. went to the US under an American Fellows sponsored fellowship and with a nomination of the Rio Partners of the Americas. The program is designed to strengthen the professional experience of public employees. Jorge had a very positive experience and spent most of his time with his host agency i.e. the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission – M-NCPPC.

In May, 2005, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) confirmed an agreement with Partners of the Americas to fund a major project to increase the prospects of employability of youth in need and youth at risk in the hemisphere. This is to be accomplished by using sports, mainly soccer, as an incentive to keep youngsters in school. The preferred age bracket is 17 to 24. Rio de Janeiro was chosen as one of three locations in Latin America (the other two are Montevideo and Ecuador). Rio/Maryland Partners are looking forward to this project, named VENCER, as an opportunity to strengthen the partnership between the two States.

Computers to Nilopolis and Bom Jardim. In the first week of October, 2005, representatives of the Greater Crofton Rotary Club, Md., Ms. Debora Fajer-Smith, Thomas B. Locke, and David Nelson, were back in Rio to deliver the 20 computers promised earlier in march. Wonderful parties honoring Rotary International, Partners of the Americas, and the State of Rio/Maryland partnership met the visitors and the equipment. It is worth noting that in Nilopolis, "Escola Companheiros de Maryland" is one of 18 schools in the Municipal system and the first one, through this gift, to enter the cyberspace era. The visitors did also meet at the Governor's Palace in Rio, Palácio Guanabara, with State of Rio Secretary for Planning, Mr. Tito Ryff, and with the Deputy Chief of the Governor's Civil Household, Mr. Thales Pontes Luz. Debora Fajer-Smith presented a gift from the Governor of Maryland to State of Rio's Governor Ms. Rosinha Garotinho, namely a Maryland flag which had flown over the Governor's Mansion in Annapolis, Md. On the occasion, the group discussed the invitation extended by the Government of Maryland for Governor Rosinha Garotinho to visit Maryland.

VOLVO OCEAN RACE - Is a round the world sailing race. It covers 32,500 nautical miles, makes port in 9 countries and travels through 4 oceans over a period of eight months. It will begin in November 2005 and ending in June 2006. The State of Rio/Maryland Partners are excited about the participation of the BRASIL – I, first Brazilian boat in the race under the command of Torben Grael and Marcelo Ferreira, the Brazilian Olympic gold medallists, from Niteroi, RJ. The fact that one of the race's legs is Rio de Janeiro – Baltimore will be a great opportunity to highlight the partnership between the two states. A big reception for the BRASIL – I is planned in Baltimore on April 28, 2006. Six kids, ages 12 to 16, from the Projeto Grael in Niteroi, will travel to Baltimore on the occasion to

The above is just a birds eye view of all that happened under the partnership on these first 40 years. It is time, before the papers get lost and the people retire, that we write up the report on the history of this relationship. A priority for the near future. The Partners Program has 60 partnerships in place in the hemisphere. Almost one third, i.e. 19, are with Brazilian states. Notwithstanding the fact that the Rio/Maryland partnership has always been one of the most active and successful, we feel that we have barely scratched the surface. We look ahead with confidence that we will consolidate and expand on these many initiatives.

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